



## SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2025.** Please include this submission form as the first page of your electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

### PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Wise County

Program Title: Mineral Gap Solar Project

Program Category: Community Development, Economic Development & Land Use; Agriculture, Environmental, & Energy

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Brian Falin

Title: Industrial Development Supervisor

Department: Economic & Industrial Development


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### SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Michael Hatfield

Title: County Administrator

Signature: 

## **2025 VACo Achievement Award Nomination Form**

### **Project – Mineral Gap Solar Project**

#### ***Project Executive Summary***

Wise County, Virginia is leveraging reclaimed abandoned mine land for economic development opportunities, including commercial and utility-scale solar projects and industrial sites for target industries. The “Mineral Gap” Solar Array is a 20-acre, 3.46 megawatt solar development on reclaimed mine land that provides behind-the-meter power to the Mineral Gap Data Center, a 65,000 sq ft Tier III colocation facility located on an adjacent site within Wise County’s Lonesome Pine Regional Business & Technology Park. The Mineral Gap project is the first commercial-scale solar development on abandoned mine land in Virginia. Wise County, located in Southwest Virginia, has long been a national energy leader, and is now leveraging its legacy in coal production to drive a future focused on renewable energy and advanced technology industries to achieve sustainable economic growth.

**2025 VACo Achievement Award Nomination Form**

***Name of Community***

Wise County

***Chief Operating Officer***

Michael Hatfield, County Administrator

***Address of Nominee***

PO Box 570

***City, State, Zip***

Wise, Virginia 24293

***Phone***

276-328-2321

***Website***

[www.wisecountyva.gov](http://www.wisecountyva.gov)

***Email***

Hatfield\_m@wisecountyva.gov

***Name of Project***

Mineral Gap Solar Project

***Generating Renewable Energy on Reclaimed Coal Mine Land***

**Innovation:** Wise County, Virginia has a proud history as a center for energy production and innovation. So, when DP Facilities decided to build a 21st century data center powered by a solar array, the community was ready to support the opportunity for new jobs supported by clean energy. The Mineral Gap Data Center presented a number of possibilities – along with a number of challenges – all at once. The result of two realities: the fast-growing data center boom being seen nation-wide and the move in rural communities throughout Southwest Virginia towards a clean energy economy. In an attempt to provide economic benefits by better utilizing reclaimed coal mine land, Wise County has leveraged previously mined properties for economic

development opportunities, including commercial and utility-scale solar projects and industrial sites for target industries.

**Project Spotlight:** The “Mineral Gap” Solar Array is a 20-acre, 3.46 megawatt solar development on reclaimed mine land that provides behind-the-meter power to the Mineral Gap Data Center, a 65,000 sq ft Tier III colocation facility located on an adjacent site within Wise County’s Lonesome Pine Regional Business & Technology Park. The Mineral Gap project is the first commercial-scale solar development on abandoned mine land in Virginia.

**Approach:**

- Conducted feasibility and site studies for renewable energy project potential
- Leveraged federal Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization (AMLER) program funding for site preparation
- Partnered with solar developer Sun Tribe to lead engineering, site prep, and construction
- Coordinated with local electric utility to interconnect with existing service
- Cultivated public-private partnership with data center via a public land lease arrangement

**Strategic Partners & Benefits:** Wise County in partnership with lead developer, Sun Tribe, collaborated closely with regional stakeholders including the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE), Virginia Department of Energy, Old Dominion Power



Company (LG&E & KU), and DP Facilities to create a new innovation: the first solar project in Virginia's history to be built on Abandoned Mine Land.

Recognizing the importance of clean energy to the region's economic development, Mineral Gap Data Center was the recipient of Federal and State support through the U.S. Department of the Interior and the Virginia Department of Energy. Even more important than short-term grants, though, is the long-range economic impact: this solar system will inject approximately \$1.2 million into the local economy over the life of the project.

In addition to reducing energy costs for the data center, Sun Tribe's on-site solar array will give DP Facilities team members an opportunity, every day, to see how solar is providing the energy needed to support the critical operations of the data center.

And yet the benefits will expand beyond the site itself — in addition to construction and maintenance jobs created through the project, the solar array at Mineral Gap Data Center will serve as a launch pad for the development of a cleaner regional economy. Sun Tribe will be working closely with local organizations like Mountain Empire Community College to support skill building and training programs for students.

The impact of the Mineral Gap Data Center solar project has been recognized far beyond Wise County. Wise County and Sun Tribe's collaboration with DP Facilities was covered nationally and regionally in Bloomberg, Energy News Network, Solar Industry Magazine, RadioIQ, and a number of other leading outlets.

PBS and VPM also recently featured the project as part of its “Creating Common Wealth” series (produced by Silverthorn Films) which focuses on how leaders throughout Virginia are spurring economic development through innovation and “follows the extraordinary stories of these change-makers as they revitalize their communities and draw out the blueprint for a prosperous and unified future of all of their neighbors.”

